

Representative Earl L. “Buddy” Carter (GA-01)

Testimony

4/18/2023

House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Member Day Hearing

Member Day Testimony (5 Minutes):

- Thank you, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larson for having me here today to share my priorities before the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.
- The work you do on this committee is incredibly important, especially now.
- Our country has made significant investments in our infrastructure through the IIJA, and it is incredibly important that you oversee and ensure that those funds and programs are properly administered to the benefit of the American people.
- For better or worse, there are billions of taxpayer dollars appropriated towards improving our infrastructure, and we must seize the opportunity to spend it wisely in a way that serves our country the best.
- As the representative of the entire coast of Georgia, your committee has a particular importance to my district.
- Every new consideration of the Water Resources Development Act is an opportunity to maintain and improve the pristine coastline that I’ve called home my entire life.
- Programs authorized by WRDA, like beach renourishment projects and coastal storm risk management on Tybee and Cumberland Islands, protect our shoreline from the varying challenges posed by the Atlantic Ocean, especially hurricanes.
- WRDA also provides the authorizations for the continued improvements to the two major ports along our coast.
- The Port of Savannah is the single largest and fastest-growing container terminal in America and now handles one out of every 8.8 loaded twenty-foot equivalent container units in the U.S.

- The Port of Brunswick is the 2nd busiest roll on-roll off port in the country.
- Combined, Georgia's deepwater ports and inland barge terminals support more than 561,000 jobs throughout the state annually, and contribute \$33 billion in income, \$140 billion in revenue and \$3.8 billion in state and local taxes to Georgia's economy.
- This would not be possible without your work on WRDA.
- A year ago this March, we completed the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project, allowing larger ships to come to Savannah.
- As you can imagine, ships have only continued to get larger, which is why I ask that the committee continue to support the implementation of the new harbor modification study authorized in the 2022 WRDA.
- This will allow the United State to remain globally competitive as we continue to grow, especially in the Southeast.
- I also ask for the Committee's continued support for the authorized construction for modifications to the Port of Brunswick as it continues to grow as well.
- These are projects through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and I would also ask for your support to for them to fulfill their mission.
- Specifically in the Savannah district that serves our district, the U.S. Army Corps is essential to completing the permits for a wide array of projects from bulkheads to debris removal to wetland mitigation credits.
- They need the resources to ensure all of these are done in a timely manner. Otherwise, it hinders the development of our region.
- As our part of state and country grows, it is important it has the resources to do so.

- Many areas of my district are rural and are experiencing significant growth now, but this puts significant strains on their infrastructure, particularly water systems.
- Places like Bryan County in my district, where Hyundai has started the largest economic development project in the state's history, need support to manage the incoming growth.
- Or cities like Nahunta and Darien in my district that are much smaller and don't have the resources to update aging systems.
- That is why I ask that the Committee continues its support for the Clean Water SRF program that helps these communities improve their water systems.
- Lastly, I will note that we also have several airports in our district that will be watching FAA reauthorization closely.
- I ask that the Committee appropriately fund the Airport Improvement Program to provide the necessary resources to these airports that face increase traffic and demands.
- I'd also ask that AIP eligible expenses be expanded to allow for new technologies that can save money and improve services.
- Technologies like Advanced Digital Construction Management Systems have been approved for use by the Federal Highways Administration and Federal Transit Administration, and they could provide similar benefits to airports.
- Your committee will certainly be busy tackling these issues and more over the next year, but I look forward to working with you in whatever capacity I can to help get it done.
- Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.